

State Representative

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36th Legislative District

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Special Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans exposed tragic failures in emergency preparedness at all levels of government that added to the suffering and loss of life and property. Many of our neighbors have asked me: Could it happen here?

Unfortunately, the answer is YES, a tragic large-scale disaster can happen here. After months of meetings with local, state and federal officials (including FEMA), I must report that:

- (1) We face some of the nation's highest earthquake risks (#2 behind California!). A massive earthquake on the active Seattle Fault would cause widespread devastation and structural collapses that would overwhelm emergency services. As a map inside shows, parts of Ballard, lower Phinney Ridge, Queen Anne, Magnolia and Interbay face risks of serious landslides and soils turning to liquid, which greatly increases risks of collapsed buildings and infrastructure.*
- (2) Improvements in disaster preparedness and emergency response are needed at all levels of government. Work on improvements has started, but much remains to be done.*
- (3) Emergency preparedness begins with individuals and families—your best protection in a disaster is to be prepared before disaster strikes. Experts helped me prepare a series of concrete steps that can help you protect your family. It's on the third page.*

After learning about the risks of a natural disaster to our local Seattle communities, I've started working with my husband John to make sure our home and family are prepared. I'm devoting this newsletter to emergency preparedness in the hope that it helps you and your family to be better prepared and safer too.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Dickerson

Keep up with the latest legislative news and my work as I get ready for 2006. Just go to my home page (<http://hdc.leg.wa.gov/members/dickerson/>).

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*Salmon Beach
Landslide*



*Sunset Lake –
Soil liquefaction
damage at Sunset
Lake*

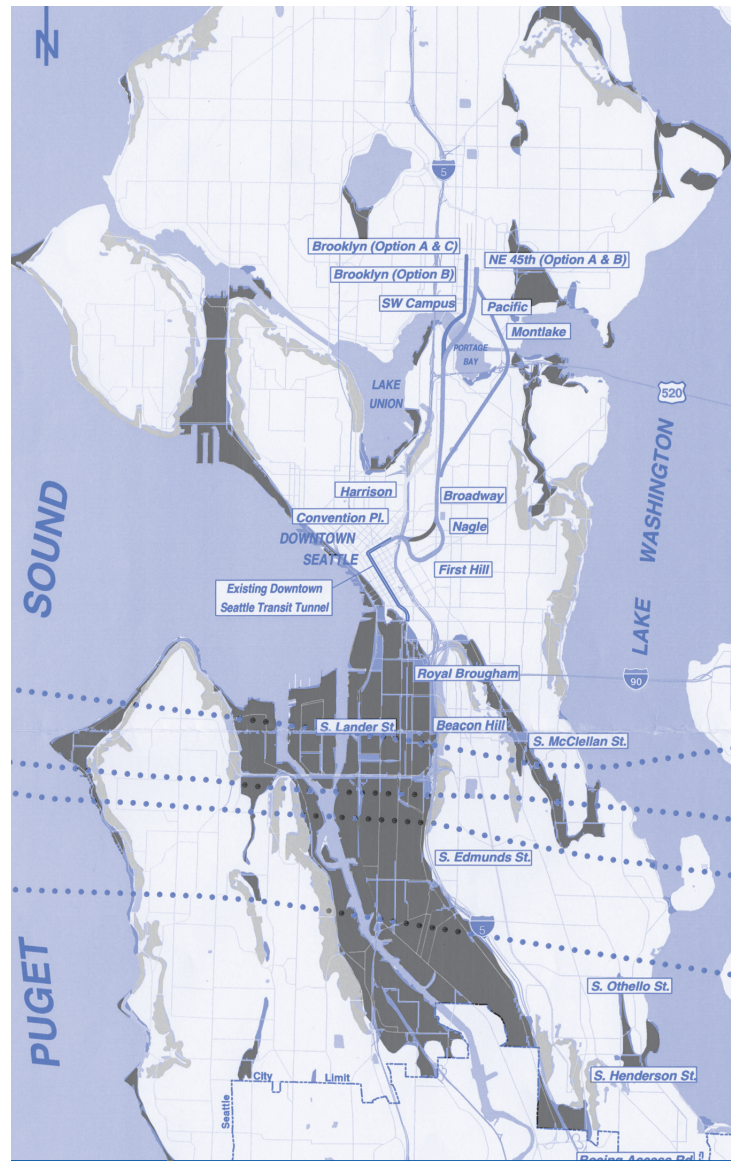
Geological mapping must be a priority

Geologic maps are the main database for identifying and adapting to geologic hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanoes. They also identify geological resources. But only about 8% of Washington has detailed geologic maps at sufficient scale.

A recent study found Kentucky's mapping project returned \$26 for each dollar spent on geological mapping. I'm working for state funding to complete geological mapping for Washington because it is essential for emergency preparedness. As one emergency manager said "we can't do our jobs unless the State Geological Survey is allowed to do its job".

What is soil liquefaction?

Earthquake pressures cause sandy, silty and some other types of soil to mix with water, lose strength and become fluid. This "liquefaction" contributes to structural collapses.



MAP LEGEND

- Potential Landslide Areas
- Risk of Soil Liquefaction
- ... Approximate Seattle Fault Zone Area



*Capitol Lake – Nisqually earthquake damage
(Photo by Karl Wegmann)*

What we can do

Emergency preparedness and planning needs improvement at all levels. At the state level, Governor Gregoire and legislators have convened meetings across Washington to improve disaster preparedness.

It is already clear we need improvements in communication and coordination of effort and geological mapping. Local communities, public health departments, police and first responders also need more tools to protect citizens and property.

State emergency preparedness will be a high priority in the 2006 Legislature. But personal and family preparedness must be a priority for all of us. I sincerely hope you review the tips on this page and help your family to be prepared to live through a disaster.

Preparing your family for a disaster

Chances are that after a major disaster, so many people will be affected that your family won't get immediate help. So it's smart for every family to have a plan:

- a safe place to meet;
- alternative ways of communicating with each other, because telephone and cell phone systems usually get overloaded during a disaster;
- emergency supplies and food that are enough for three days.

Family communications

- ___ Decide where and when to reunite your family if a disaster occurs.
- ___ Choose a person outside the immediate area to contact if family members are separated. Long distance phone service will probably be restored sooner than local service. Do not use the phone immediately following a disaster.
- ___ Make sure all family members know about your disaster plan. Also, relay this information to babysitters or others who might be in your home.
- ___ Know the policies of the school and daycare your children attend. Make sure your child's emergency release card is up to date. Designate others to pick up your children if you can't.
- ___ If you have a family member who does not speak English, prepare an emergency card written in English with that person's name, address and any special needs such as medication or allergies.

Emergency supplies

- ___ Have at least a three-day supply of food, water, clothes, medical supplies and other necessary equipment for everyone in your family. (See the "Suggested Emergency Kit Checklist".)
- ___ Keep a small amount of extra cash available. If the power is out, ATM machines will not operate.
- ___ Keep an extra pair of eyeglasses, house keys and car keys on hand.



Home safety

- ___ Locate shutoff valves for water, gas, and electricity. Learn how to shut off the valves before an earthquake or other disaster.
- ___ Conduct earthquake and fire drills once every six months.
- ___ Identify "safe spots" in each room.
- ___ Establish all the possible ways to exit your home. Keep all exits clear of debris.
- ___ Know the locations of the nearest fire and police stations.

Vital Information

- ___ Make copies of your vital records and store them in a safe deposit box in another city or state. Make sure your originals are stored safely.
- ___ Take photos and videotapes of your home and your valuables. Make copies and place them in a safe deposit box in another city or state.
- ___ Enter emergency phone numbers into your cellphone.



Suggested Emergency Kit Checklist

- ☐ Water: 1 gallon per person per day, plus a water filtering device
- ☐ Food: non-perishable canned goods with can opener, granola bars, protein bars, "comfort" foods like cookies or hard candy
- ☐ Portable radio or Tone Alert weather radio
- ☐ Extra set of clothes with sturdy shoes
- ☐ Flashlight with extra batteries or light stick
- ☐ Waterproof matches and candles
- ☐ Multi-purpose pocket knife
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ First Aid kit, including a three-day supply of prescription drugs, and first aid handbook
- ☐ Entertainment items like a deck of cards
- ☐ Duct tape and plastic if you need to shelter-in-place
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Put together small versions for the office, school and car.
- ☐ Remember, emergency supply kits should be designed to fit your needs.

Resources on the Web

**Washington State Military Department—
Emergency Management Division:** www.emd.wa.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
King County Emergency Services:
<http://www.metrokc.gov/prepare/>
Seattle Emergency Preparedness:
<http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/preparedness.htm>





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A recent scenario based on a massive (magnitude 6.7) earthquake on the Seattle Fault predicts: more than 1,600 dead and 24,000 injured; police and fire departments overwhelmed; inadequate emergency and shelter services; nearly 40,000 buildings destroyed or rendered uninhabitable ...

Much remains to be done that could reduce the damage and death toll.

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